

Claims

1. A method of improving or maintaining absorption of vitamin E in a pet animal, the
5 method including the step of feeding the pet an edible composition that promotes or maintains or improves its lipid absorption capacity.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the composition comprises one or more of a pancreatic function-promoter, a liver function-promoter, and an intestinal mucosa
10 function-promoter.
3. A method according to claim 2 wherein the pancreatic function-promoter comprises a lipase, a gut pH modifier or a pancreatic extract.
- 15 4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the gut pH modifier includes one or more of an acidifier, an alkalinizer, a buffer, a prebiotic or a probiotic micro-organism.
5. A method according to any one of claims 2 to 4 wherein the liver function-promoter is selected from taurine, emulsifiers, vitamins, minerals, glutathione and glutathione
20 promoters, and combinations thereof.
6. A method according to any one of claims 2 to 5 wherein the liver function-promoter is a nutrient that increases endogenous glutathione after ingestion.
- 25 7. A method according to any one of claims 2 to 6 wherein the intestinal mucosa function promoter includes a fat transportation aid, agent or carrier.
8. A method according to claim 7 wherein the aid, agent or carrier is selected from whey protein and proteases having the capacity to promote the formation of
30 lipoproteins.
9. A method according to claim 7 or 8 wherein the intestinal mucosa function-promoter includes an anti-inflammatory agent, lactoferrin, a prebiotic or a probiotic micro-organism.

10. A method according to claim 9 wherein the anti-inflammatory agent is an omega-3 fatty acid.
11. A method according to any one of claims 7 to 10 wherein the fat transportation aid, 5 agent or carrier has a fatty acid profile selected to improve intestinal absorption.
12. A method according to claim 11 wherein the fatty acid profile is of a medium chain triglyceride.
- 10 13. A method according to claim 11 or claim 12 wherein the fat transportation aid, agent or carrier comprises whey protein.
14. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the composition is administered as a nutritionally balanced, ready-to-eat meal.
- 15 15. A method according to claim 14 wherein the meal comprises a dried pet food kibble.
16. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 13 wherein the composition is administered as a meal supplement.
- 20 17. A method according to claim 16 wherein the meal supplement is in the form of a treat.
18. A method of maintaining or improving the serum vitamin E level in a pet animal comprising the step of feeding the pet animal an edible composition that promotes 25 or maintains or improves its lipid absorption capacity.
19. A method according to claim 18 wherein the composition comprises one or more of a pancreatic function-promoter, a liver function-promoter, and an intestinal mucosa function-promoter.
- 30 20. A method according to claim 19 method wherein the pancreatic function-promoter comprises a lipase, a gut pH modifier or a pancreatic extract.

21. A method according to claim 19 or claim 20 wherein the liver function-promoter is selected from taurine, emulsifiers, vitamins, minerals, glutathione and glutathione promoters, and combinations thereof.
- 5 22. A method according to any one of claims 19 to 21 wherein the intestinal mucosa function promoter includes a fat transportation aid, agent or carrier.
23. A method according to any one of claims 19 to 22 wherein the fat transportation aid, agent or carrier has a fatty acid profile selected to improve intestinal absorption.
- 10 24. A method according to any one of claims 18 to 23 wherein the composition is administered as a nutritionally balanced, ready-to-eat meal.
25. A method according to claim 24 wherein the meal comprises a dried pet food kibble.
- 15 26. A method according to claim 24 or claim 25 wherein the meal is administered daily.
27. A composition for use in improving or maintaining absorption of vitamin E in a pet animal including a component selected from the group consisting of pancreatic function promoters, liver function-promoters, intestinal mucosa function promoters and combinations thereof, in an amount effective to promote or maintain or improve the lipid absorption capacity of the said pet.
- 20 28. The composition of claim 27 for use in a method of improving or maintaining absorption of vitamin E in a pet animal, the method comprising administering the composition to the pet as a nutritionally balanced, ready-to-eat meal.
- 25 29. The composition of claim 28 wherein the meal is a wet pet food.
- 30 30. The composition of claim 28 wherein the meal is a dry pet food.
31. The composition of any one of claims 27 to 30 wherein the liver function promoter is lecithin.

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32. The composition of claim 31 wherein the lecithin is obtained from a source selected from the group consisting of soya, sunflower oil, wheat germ, egg, avocado and combinations thereof.
- 5 33. A method of improving the appearance of a pet comprises the step of increasing its serum vitamin E level by feeding the pet a diet that contains an agent selected from a fat emulsifier or fat emulsification system, a fat transportation agent, an acidifying agent and combinations thereof.
- 10 34. A method according to claim 33 wherein the fat transportation agent comprises whey protein.

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